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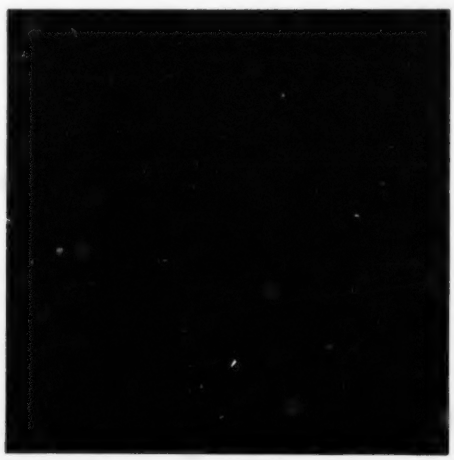

PM-3 8½″x11″ PHOTOGRAPHIC GENERAL TARGET
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Economic and Social
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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fiftieth session
Item 10 (a) of the provisional agenda

QUESTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS SUBJECTED TO ANY FORM OF DETENTION OR IMPRISONMENT, IN PARTICULAR: TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Report by the Secretary-General

1. The United Nations pays special attention to the elimination of torture, which is strictly prohibited by a large number of rules of international law and is not to be tolerated under any circumstances, even during states of emergency or armed conflict. Torture is one of the most serious violations of human integrity, since it may lead to physical and mental consequences which can last for years or even be irreversible.

2. Despite the various measures taken by the United Nations to encourage the implementation of rules for protection against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, torture continues to be used in many countries. In order to assist the victims of torture, the General Assembly decided, in resolution 36/151, to establish the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. The Fund receives

voluntary contributions for distribution, through established channels of assistance, in the form of medical, psychological, economic, social, legal, financial or other aid to organizations providing assistance to individuals who have been victims of torture and to relatives of such victims.

3. The General Assembly, in resolution 36/151, authorized the Fund's Board of Trustees to promote and solicit contributions and pledges. It also appealed to all Governments to respond favourably to requests for regular contributions to the Fund. The Fund also receives gifts from non-governmental organizations and private individuals.

4. In accordance with the arrangements (A/36/540) adopted in 1981 by the General Assembly in resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981, the Secretary-General reports every year to the Commission on Human Rights on the management of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, indicating the sums at the Fund's disposal, the pledges and payments received, as well as the disbursements under the Fund. This report has been drafted in conformity with the above arrangements.

Consolidated report on 10 years of activity

5. The Commission on Human Rights at its forty-eighth session, in resolution 1992/27 of 28 February 1992, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its forty-ninth session a consolidated report on the work carried out by the Fund during its 10 years of activity (1982-1992).

6. The report (E/CN.4/1993/23) was also transmitted to members of the Committee against Torture and to members of the Fund's Board of Trustees. The Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a revised version updated to 6 October 1993 (A/48/520), which is available to the Commission on Human Rights at its present session and contains information on contributions received and programmes supported to date.

Fund-raising campaign

7. The Fund is administered, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 36/151, by the Secretary-General, assisted by a Board of Trustees which has been authorized by the General Assembly to promote and solicit contributions and pledges. The Board of Trustees currently consists of the following persons, chosen by the Secretary-General for their wide experience in the field of human rights and acting in their personal capacity: Mr. Jaap Walkate, Chairman, Mrs. Elisabeth Odio Benito, Mr. Ribot Hatano, Mr. Ivan Tosevski and Mr. S. Amos Wako.

8. In resolution 1993/38 of 5 March 1993, the Commission recalled the statement by the Board of Trustees on the need to receive contributions from Governments on a regular basis, with a view to preventing the interruption of programmes of assistance to victims of torture in the continuation of which the Fund plays an instrumental role.

9. The Commission also took account of the fund-raising campaign launched on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees at its eleventh session, in 1992, with a view to enhancing the Fund's capacity to respond more favourably to the increasing number of requests for assistance to victims of torture.

10. The Commission expressed its gratitude and appreciation to Governments, organizations and individuals that had already contributed to the Fund, and appealed to all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to respond favourably to the fund-raising campaign and to requests for contributions, on a regular basis if possible.

11. The Secretary-General was requested to transmit to all Governments the appeal for contributions to the Fund made by the Commission in its resolution 1993/38. On behalf of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, sent to all Governments on 19 October 1993 a letter referring to the Commission's resolution 1993/38, and transmitting a letter from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees calling on every Government to respond favourably to the appeals made by the Commission and by the General Assembly in resolution 47/109. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights strongly supported the request by the Chairman, Mr. Jaap Walkate, for regular and substantial contributions, with a view to maintaining the Fund's support to tens of thousands of victims of torture over a long period. The experience of organizations supported by the Fund indicates that the physical and psychological after-effects of torture can persist for years after the act of torture has been committed. In addition, Mr. Fall pointed out that in 1993 the Fund should have paid out almost $4 million in response to applications for assistance, whereas it had only $2 million at its disposal.

12. The Governments which have responded favourably to these appeals by making a contribution between 5 October 1993 and the date of submission of the present report are the following:

Government	Contribution/Year	Number/amount of previous contributions
	(in US$)	(in US$)
Austria	10 000 for 1993	9th 10 000 (1992)
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	5 000 for 1993	2nd 5 000 (1988)
Sweden 1/	247 142 for 1993	7th 173 631 (1992)

13. At the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, held in New York on 2 and 3 November 1993, Governments of the following States made pledges for the year 1994:

Government	Local currency		Estimate	Number/amount of previous contributions
			(in US$)	(in US$)
Algeria	DA	5 000	219	1st contribution
Germany	DM	200 000	119 048	12th/pledge of DM 194 000 for 1993 2/
Chile			2 000	2nd/2 000 for 1991 3/
Iceland	ISK	250 000	3 853	8th/5 350 for 1992 4/
Liechtenstein	SwF	10 000		6th/6 438 for 1992 5/
Luxembourg	LuxF	100 000	2 778	10th/3 018 for 1992 6/
Netherlands	f.	200 000	106 383	13th/115 607 for 1993
Tunisia	D	1 500	1 515	5th/two contributions had been paid for 1993: 1 948 and 1 753 7/
	Total		237 924	

14. Figures for 1993 pledges made prior to 2 November 1993 are given in the report to the General Assembly (A/48/520, para. 24).

15. On 28 April 1993, the Board of Trustees recommended that virtually all of the sums then available for grants should be allocated to projects designated for effective implementation as from 1993. On 14 May, the Chairman of the Board officially submitted all the recommendations approved by the Board to the Secretary-General. After approval of those recommendations by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, on behalf of the Secretary-General, on 28 May all organizations were informed of the decisions taken, and a first tranche of grants, amounting to US$ 1,553,300, was made to the programmes concerned on 14 June. Subsequently, satisfactory reports were received with regard to other programmes which were subject to conditions (submission of narrative reports, financial reports or auditors' reports on previous grants, additional information requested by the Board, etc.), and the secretariat of the Fund, after the necessary consultations with the Chairman of the Board, was able to free an additional sum of US$ 172,500. Accordingly, out of a total of US$ 2,056,880 allocated by the Board in April 1993, a sum of US$ 331,080 remains outstanding, pending receipt of latest reports and satisfactory information.

Promotional activities

16. The film "Off Limits", partly subsidized by the Fund, has been made available to a dozen or so institutions also in receipt of grants by the Fund, and is currently being used for training experts and for educating the general public.

17. The address for applications for grants or information about the Fund is:

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT)
Centre for Human Rights
United Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10

Tel: (4122) 917 33 94 or 917 33 95
Fax: (4122) 917 01 23

18. Voluntary contributions from Governments, foundations, non-governmental organizations or individuals may be sent by cheque or bank transfer to:

"United Nations Geneva General Fund", marked

"For attention United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture"
Chemical Bank
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
United States of America

Account No. 015-004473 in United States dollars, or to:

Société de Banque Suisse
Boite postale 2770
CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

Account Nos. CO.590.160.1 in United States dollars or CO.590.160.0 in Swiss francs, or by cheque to:

Treasury
Office 213
United Nations
CH-1211, Geneva 10
Switzerland

Notes

1/ Sweden doubled the amount of its contribution from SKr 1 million in 1992 to SKr 2 million in 1993.

2/ Germany contributed DM 150,000 in 1983, and DM 200,000 annually from 1984 to 1992. The Government pledged a contribution of DM 194,000 for 1993, and announced that it would be paid before the end of that year. At the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, the Government orally pledged DM 200,000 for 1994, a pledge still to be confirmed in writing.

3/ Payment of the first contribution, made in 1993, is in fulfilment of a pledge made in 1991.

4/ Iceland has made no pledge for 1993. Its pledge for 1994 is subject to parliamentary approval.

5/ Liechtenstein contributed a sum of SwF 5,000 in 1984, 1986 and 1988, and a sum of SwF 10,000 in 1991 and 1992. The Government has announced its intention to make a payment for 1993 before the end of the year.

6/ Luxembourg has made no pledge for 1993.

7/ The Tunisian Government has made an oral pledge which is still to be confirmed in writing.

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